



## Chief Reader Report on Student Responses: 2025 AP<sup>®</sup> United States History Set 2 Free-Response Questions

|                             |            |         |      |
|-----------------------------|------------|---------|------|
| • Number of Students Scored | 518,247    |         |      |
| • Number of Readers         | 3274       |         |      |
| • Score Distribution        | Exam Score | N       | %At  |
|                             | 5          | 73,277  | 14.1 |
|                             | 4          | 187,347 | 36.2 |
|                             | 3          | 120,884 | 23.3 |
|                             | 2          | 95,172  | 18.4 |
|                             | 1          | 41,567  | 8.0  |
| • Global Mean               | 3.30       |         |      |

The following comments on the 2025 free-response questions for AP<sup>®</sup> United States History were written by the Chief Reader, Hilary Green, James B. Duke Professor, Davidson College. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

## Short Answer Question 1

**Task:** Short Answer Question

**Topic:** Historians on the Cold War

|                          | Max Points: | Mean Score: |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Part A                   | 1           | 0.66        |
| Part B                   | 1           | 0.38        |
| Part C                   | 1           | 0.60        |
| Overall Mean Score: 1.64 |             |             |

***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Responses were expected to describe a difference between two arguments about the origins of the Cold War. The first excerpt, by Robert A. Pollard, argues that economic differences were a key cause of the Cold War. The second excerpt, by James Patterson, argues that Soviet actions and fears concerning the spread of communism were a key cause of the Cold War.
- Responses were expected to provide relevant evidence from the period between 1940 and 1960 and explain how that evidence supports each of the arguments found in the excerpts.
- This question focused on analyzing historical evidence and secondary sources.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 8.2 and 8.3.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

- Responses reflected familiarity with the events between 1940 and 1960 that led to the Cold War and used descriptive skills to support claims made by Pollard and Patterson.
- Many responses supported Pollard's argument by citing evidence of economic developments, including the Marshall Plan, United States economic sanctions against the USSR, and/or the creation of a free-market economy despite global communist influence.
- To support Patterson's argument, many responses cited the concern of the spread of communism evident in the Second Red Scare, the policy of containment seen in the Truman Doctrine, domino theory, and the United States intervention in Korea.

***What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?***

| <i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some responses struggle to properly place postwar economic developments within the time frame, often attempting to use events from the 1930s or 1990s to support Pollard's argument.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better responses were able to use Cold War events in the response to either Part B or Part C.<br/><br/>"One even from 1940-1960 that supports Pollard's interpretation is the creation of the international organization NATO. For instance, NATO was a organization comprised of the USA and more western European nations in which the USA provided financial help to the European nations if they promised to not</li></ul> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>become communist and supported democracy. As a result, when Europe was rebuilt it led to trade between the USA and other countries that helped support the economy.”</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses did not properly explain the chronology of direct and indirect military confrontations in the Cold War during the period from 1940 to 1960.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses explained relevant and insightful connections about the causes of the Cold War across the period.</li> </ul> <p>“One event from 1940-1960 that can support Patterson’s argument was the Warsaw Pact made by the Soviets. A cause of this was that in 1949, the US and West Europe, established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and as a result, formed a buffer against the Soviet Union’s expansionist plans. This made the Soviets fearful as they thought that the US and her allies would surround and destroy the USSR so they needed a way to counter NATO. An effect of this was the Warsaw Pact in which the Eastern European countries all signed a mutual defense treaty with the Soviet Union and that divided Europe into an ‘iron curtain’ with both sides having support from the superpowers of the world”</p>                                                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses did not properly connect the United States’ actions in Vietnam to the time period from 1940 to 1960.</li> </ul>                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses explained the escalation of the variety of measures the United States took to contain communism within the time period from 1940 to 1960.</li> </ul> <p>“Patterson’s interpretation of the Cold War as ultimately an ideological conflict and competition can be supported by US increased involvement in the Vietnam War. When Vietnamese Communist rebels led by Ho Chi Minh overthrew their French overlords, the US, out of fear of this communism supported South Vietnam through US military forces and aid against Communist North Vietnam to prevent the spreading of Soviet Union Communism. The increased involvement in US proxy wars such as the Vietnam War, demonstrated the US’s military conflict with Communist governments in an attempt to suppress the spread of Communist ideals, and maintain democracy, showing US involvement in the Cold War being based upon ideological reasons.”</p> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses did not correctly describe a claim in the excerpts.</li> </ul>                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses accurately described the claims in the excerpts, and some demonstrated a sophisticated comparison of Pollard’s argument that the United States initiated the Cold War for economic reasons with Patterson’s argument that the United States responded to Soviet actions.</li> </ul> <p>“A difference between Pollard’s and Patterson’s historical interpretations of the origins of the Cold War is the motives of the US’s ‘indirect participation’ in the Cold War. Pollard asserts that Cold War’s ground was founded on the US foreign policy of economic security, while Patterson focuses more on the effects of the public’s fear of Soviet expansion and ultimate control of the global power. More subjectively, Pollard’s interpretation is that the cause was ‘internal’ (inside the US) over Patterson’s interpretation being that of the ‘external’ (caused by the opponent of USSR).”</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses did not correctly explain how evidence supported Pollard’s argument that the origins of the Cold War were primarily economic.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses explained both the historical development and why it supports Pollard’s argument.</li> </ul> <p>“One development that supports Pollard’s point of view is the development of the military industrial complex. A phrase cautionary coined by Dwight D. Eisenhower, the military industrial complex is the tightly knit relationship that is formed between domestic industry that produces weapons and supplies, and the military that requires these supplies and uses them to engage in conflict abroad. As military involvements over seas such as in the Korean and Vietnam Wars grew more numerous, more and more weapons and supplies were purchased by the government to support their endeavors, pumping money into the factories and distribution centers that played a strong, integral role in the American economy.”</p>                                                                     |

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

- Students struggled with the connections between foreign policy and economics during the twentieth century.
  - Teachers could utilize a Venn diagram to discuss the connections between various AP United States History course themes, such as Work/Exchange/Technology and United States and the World.
  - Students could create timelines that plot out significant dates, studying major landmarks to understand what happens before and after those dates.
- Teachers could emphasize the acquisition of vocabulary terms, such as monetary policy, tariffs and various financial systems, to support student comfort with economic material.
- Teachers could create an exercise that guides students to identify key phrases from the excerpts, then practice rephrasing and adding additional support.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Modules on Period 8: 1945–1980, which address the content related to this question.
- The optional activity for Topic 8.7 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#) offers students an opportunity to practice comparing arguments and use of evidence in sources, two important skills for this question.
- Teachers may utilize some of the optional sources for Topics 8.2 and 8.3 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#)—such as George Kennan’s “Long Telegram” and Margaret Chase Smith’s “Declaration of Conscience”—to examine the early years of the Cold War.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be found at: <https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushhistory/resource-library/>.

## Short Answer Question 2

**Task:** Short Answer Question

**Topic:** African American Women's Activism

|                          | Max Points: | Mean Score: |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Part A                   | 1           | 0.71        |
| Part B                   | 1           | 0.43        |
| Part C                   | 1           | 0.40        |
| Overall Mean Score: 1.55 |             |             |

***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Responses were expected to describe the author's purpose in a speech from 1897 and explain how historical developments were influenced by its ideas in the periods 1865 to 1897 for Part B and 1897 to 1945 for Part C.
- Responses could utilize a wide range of content knowledge including significant events, individuals, and important eras or trends related to but not limited to the activism of African Americans for civil rights in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.
- The question primarily addressed Topics 5.10, 5.11 6.4, 6.6, 6.11, 7.4. 7.10, and 7.12.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

- Responses were most successful in describing the purpose of the excerpt, discussing the ways that the excerpt was a call for people to continue to oppose discrimination and to continue to be active in public discussions regarding equality, especially African American women.
- Responses often identified and explained the context of the Reconstruction Amendments, discussing the ways they advanced the rights of African Americans while acknowledging the many efforts to restrict those rights through a variety of means.
- Responses often identified and explained the historical development of the women's suffrage movement and, to some extent, the temperance movement that emerged from the ideas presented in the excerpt.
- Responses often identified and explained historical developments of social and cultural change, such as the Harlem Renaissance, that emerged from the ideas stated in the excerpt.

***What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?***

| <i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>                                                                                                                                          | <i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A common error was misunderstanding the purpose of the excerpt. Responses often simply repeated sections of the response verbatim.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better responses described the purpose of the speech in the context of the conditions of the late nineteenth century for African Americans.<br/><br/>"Terrel's purpose in this excerpt is to say that African American women have come together to argue for equality and equal rights and uplift the Black race with the goal of improving humanity."</li></ul> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A common error was simply mentioning a person or event without relating it back to the prompt.</li> </ul>                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses explained the connection between the prompt and events that were inspired by the ideas expressed in the excerpt.</li> </ul> <p>“One development in the preceding time period that supports her claim is the passing of the 13th ammendment. This vital peice of legilstation permanantly outlawed slavery in the United States on a federal level. This supports Terrell’s claim because it shows how Afircan American women have gone from being subjecet to bondage and forced labor to free, independant citizens of the US, which is clearly a continuity with her claim that African American women have made progress.”</p>                                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A common error was the claim that the Second Great Awakening, the Seneca Falls Convention, and the Emancation Proclomation were significant events in the period 1865 to 1897.</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses explained how a historical development related to the prompt contributed to the ideas expressed in the excerpt in the period from 1865 to 1897.</li> </ul> <p>“One histocial development between 1865 and 1987 that contributed to the ideas expressed in the excerpt was the Plessy vs Furgesson supreme court desision. This court dission ruled segregation was allowed and didnt contridict the reconstruction amendments, sparking debates over equal treatment of African American. This court case, contributed to the ideas expressed in the exceprt because it caused the creation of African American movements to bring racial unity in the United States.”</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A common error was the claim that Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., and the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s were significant events in the period from 1897 to 1945.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better responses explained how a historical development related to the prompt contributed to the ideas expressed in the excerpt in the period from 1897 to 1945.</li> </ul> <p>“Terrell’s ideas contributed to the creation of the NAACP by WEB DuBois and Ida B Wells. These activists argued for the improvement of Black people and the organization raised funding and helped African Americans in education and jobs and fought for more equality in the Country. The founders’ goals reflect Terrell’s ideas of the elevation of the entire Black Race and continued the struggle for equal rights.”</p>                                                                              |

**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

- Although ACE (Answer, Cite, Explain) is a well-known strategy around the country, a productive strategy may be throughout the year to scaffold the skills by point within the SAQ. For example, early in the year emphasis can be placed on Part A, as students develop mastery of reading and describing primary sources without simply restating the ideas expressed in the prompt. They can then move on to “Cite” and “Explain.” Some responses demonstrated a lack of the elaboration regarding the “Explain” aspect. Typically, responses lacked an explanation of how their evidence related back to the prompt.
  - Teachers can go over the meaning of the task verbs “Describe” and “Explain.”
  - Encourage students to describe a feature of their own lives and then explain to another student something they know how to do. Once they have done that, they should take a recently learned concept and describe/explain as an exit ticket or a warm-up. This practice might lead to better student success.
- Students frequently struggled with chronology. Teachers might practice with various timelines throughout the year that are broken down by specific topic or theme, rather than attempting to provide an entire overview.
- Students frequently struggled with the difference between civil rights leaders of the late nineteenth century, such as Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois.
  - Select an appropriate reading that explains the overall beliefs of Washington and DuBois. After completing the reading and conducting a brief discussion, ask students to create a Venn Diagram of the differences and similarities between the two leaders.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Modules on Period 5: 1844–1877, Period 6: 1865–1898, and Period 7: 1890–1945, which address the content related to this question.
- The optional activity for Topic 6.4 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#) offers students an opportunity to practice the skill of sourcing and situation.
- Teachers may utilize some of the optional sources for Topics 5.10, 6.11 and 7.8 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#)—such as France Ellen Watkins Harper’s speech “We are All Bound Up Together,” the “National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union Annual Leaflet,” and Langston Hughes’ poem, “Mother to Son”—to discuss ongoing political, cultural and social debates during the period.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be found at: <https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushhistory/resource-library/>.



### Short Answer Question 3

**Task:** Short Answer Question

**Topic:** Revolutionary and Early United States Politics

|                                 | <b>Max Points:</b> | <b>Mean Score:</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Part A</b>                   | 1                  | 0.67               |
| <b>Part B</b>                   | 1                  | 0.60               |
| <b>Part C</b>                   | 1                  | 0.29               |
| <b>Overall Mean Score:</b> 1.50 |                    |                    |

***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Responses were expected to describe one political debate in British North America from 1763 to 1783.
- Responses were expected to describe one effect of the ratification of the Constitution from 1789 to 1800.
- Responses were expected to explain how one group responded to debates about federal government power from 1800 to 1840.
- Responses could utilize a wide range of content knowledge including the idea of “taxation without representation,” the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the Boston Massacre, debates over the rights of colonists, the creation of a stronger national government under the United States Constitution, the addition of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution, the formation of the Federalist and Democratic-Republican political parties, the national bank, the Louisiana Purchase, the American System, Jacksonian opposition to the national bank, and the Nullification Crisis, among many other possibilities.
- The questions addressed many topics, including Topics 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.8.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

- Many responses successfully described a political debate from 1763 to 1783. Common responses included the debate between loyalists and Patriots over whether to declare independence and the debate between the British colonists and British officials over imperial policies such as taxation, the quartering of soldiers, and virtual representation.
- Many responses successfully described an effect of the United States Constitution from 1789 to 1800. Common responses included the addition of new branches of government, the protection of rights under the newly adopted Bill of Rights, the emergence of political parties, and debates over the interpretation of the Constitution (e.g., loose versus strict constructionism).
- Many responses successfully explained how a group responded to debates over the power of the federal government from 1800 to 1840. There was a wide range of responses, including the constitutionality of the Louisiana Purchase, the emergence of the Whig Party and their responses to the actions of Andrew Jackson, and Jacksonian responses to the national bank, nullification, and tariffs. The most sophisticated responses discussed the changing ideologies of some groups and their subsequent responses. Examples of this included Jeffersonian support for the Louisiana Purchase and the Embargo Act, Henry Clay as a Whig proposing an expansion of the federal government through the American System, and Jacksonian responses to the Nullification Crisis in South Carolina.
- A skill needed for this question was identifying the effects of the ratification of the Constitution and responses to the growing power of the national government (Reasoning Process 2: Causation).
- A skill needed for this question was Skill 1: Developments and Processes, such as identifying and explaining a historical development and its effects.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

| <i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A common knowledge gap was a misunderstanding of the word “debate.” Responses sometimes merely listed and described events during the time period rather than framing them as a debate. A related misunderstanding was failing to identify a group in Part C.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses correctly described a debate from 1763 to 1783 in Part A and explained a group’s response in Part C.<br/><br/>“One political debate in British North America from 1763 to 1783 was between loyalty to Britain and the fight for independence. Loyalists, who advocated for loyalty to the British crown, often debated with the Patriots, who were advocating for increased rights in Parliament. As such, they often came into conflict due to their political ideas over American independence during the period of 1763 to 1783.”</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Another common knowledge gap was an error in chronology. Responses often confused Shays’s Rebellion and the Whiskey Rebellion and their respective time periods.</li> </ul>                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses correctly described the effect of the Constitution from 1789 to 1800 as a general strengthening of the national government in contrast to the condition under the Articles of Confederation.<br/><br/>“One effect of the ratification of the United States Constitution from 1789 to 1800 was the vast increase in federal power. During the days of the Articles, the central government was weak and had no power to tax, enforce laws, and maintain national finances. so once the ratification of the constitution was done it empowered the options that the federal government could have, it could tax, enforce laws, create laws, and had some power over the state governments.”</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses often confused the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution and/or placed them in the incorrect time period.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses correctly distinguished between developments related to the Articles of Confederation and ones related to the Constitution.<br/><br/>“One effect of the ratification of the United States Constitution was the ability of the federal government to enforce legislation. This was seen in the Whiskey Rebellion, which proved the strength of the new government because</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Washington was able to federally tax whiskey and to provide military aid to end a rebellion, both of these things couldn't be done under the Articles of Confederation which was seen by Shay's rebellion and the US inability to provide aid." |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

- Students often struggled to differentiate between identify, describe, and explain.
  - Teachers could review these terms' meanings and the other "task words" listed in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#) and then practice their usage through bell ringers.
- Students often misunderstood the term "debate" and simply identified an event rather than framing it as a debate. Similarly, students often struggle identifying groups and how they responded to debates over the growing power of the national government.
  - Teachers could create a T-chart identifying several opposing groups from the Revolutionary period into the early nineteenth century and differentiating between their varying positions.
- Students struggled to place historical developments in the correct chronological period.
  - Teachers could have students develop timelines for each unit, aligning them with the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#)
  - Teachers could combine the two suggestions above (charting groups/policy positions and timelines) by having students create timelines for major groups and political parties while also categorizing concurrent events appropriately.
- Students often struggled with early political ideology, the advent of political parties, and the evolution of party politics.
  - Teachers could use a Venn diagram to compare the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans.
  - Alternatively (or as a next step), teachers could use a T-chart to compare the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, taking care to distinguish the difference between the First Party System and the Federalists and Anti-Federalists of the ratification debates. Potential categories to use for comparison of the first political parties are as follows: interpretation of the Constitution, the role of the federal government, the national bank, tariffs, foreign policy, and/or socio-economic appeal of the different political groups.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Modules on Period 3: 1754–1800 and Period 4: 1800–1848, which address the content related to this question.
- The optional activity for Topic 4.7 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#) offers students an opportunity to practice explaining a historical development.

- Teachers may utilize some of the optional sources for Topics 3.10, 4.2, and 4.8 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#)—such as James Madison’s letter to Robert R. Livingston, Thomas Jefferson’s letter to Alexander Dallas, and John Quincy Adams’ letter to John McLean—to discuss politics during the early republic.
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be found at: <https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushhistory/resource-library/>.

## Short Answer Question 4

**Task:** Short Answer Question

**Topic:** Political Debates during the Twentieth Century

|                          | Max Points: | Mean Score: |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Part A                   | 1           | 0.49        |
| Part B                   | 1           | 0.47        |
| Part C                   | 1           | 0.40        |
| Overall Mean Score: 1.37 |             |             |

***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Responses were expected to describe one political debate that took place between 1910 and 1929.
- Responses were expected to describe one effect of the New Deal.
- Responses were expected to explain the response of one group to government power between 1945 and 1970.
- This question primarily addresses Topics 7.8, 7.10, 8.6, 8.7, 8.9, and 8.12.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

- Many responses successfully described a political debate that took place between 1910 and 1929.
- Many responses successfully described one effect of the New Deal.
- Responses often explained responses to government power between 1945 and 1970 but sometimes failed to identify a specific group associated with those responses.
- Responses that did not earn a point for Part A often explained an economic event, such as the Great Depression, that they did not clearly connect to a political debate. Other responses that did not earn a point for Part A described a political debate outside of the time period of the prompt, such as the election of Franklin Roosevelt.
- Responses that did not earn a point for Part B frequently used generalizations such as “the government gave jobs” without any real tie to the New Deal or the period of the prompt.
- Responses that did not earn a point for Part C sometimes failed to identify a specific group, identifying generalizations such as “the people” without connecting those to a specific movement or ideal.

***What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?***

| <i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A common knowledge gap was a vague description of a women’s movement for a better position in society without a reference—such as suffrage advocacy—that tied the movement to the period from 1910 to 1929.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better responses described a specific political debate that took place between 1910 and 1929.<br/><br/>“One political debate in the United States between 1920 and 1929 was for women’s suffrage and the ratification of the 19th Amendment. . . . This shows how women’s suffrage was a debate as it demonstrates how</li></ul> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>women persistently sought to acquire the right to vote since they were considered as politically inferior and ultimately received the right to vote in 1919 with the 19th Amendment being ratified, being the end of the debate.”</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Another common knowledge gap was mentioning the First World War but not indicating any debate about isolationism versus international involvement.</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses explained the debate between isolationists and interventionists during the First World War.</li> </ul> <p>“One major debate in the United States between 1910 and 1929 was whether US foreign policy should lean more internationalist or isolationist. This debate was present in most of the politics of the time, with especially the years of WWI from 1914 to 1918 sparking great debate as to what level US involvement should sit at.”</p>                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A common mistake for Part B is that students sometimes wrote in generalizations without tying those ideas to the New Deal and the period from 1932 to 1945.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses were more likely to earn the point for Part B when they described a specific effect with direct connections to the New Deal.</li> </ul> <p>“One effect of the New Deal from 1932 to 1945 was that it fostered more economic relief and recovery for society which can be seen with the Public Works Administration. The Public Works Administration was a legislative effort under the New Deal which gave jobs to the unemployed as more public projects would be made.”</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students sometimes failed to identify a specific group in Part C.</li> </ul>                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better student responses explained a particular group and the response of that group to government power.</li> </ul> <p>“One group that responded to the debates about government power from 1945 to 1970 was the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) which responded to government power by protesting segregation laws. The SNCC was a protesting organization that sought to acquire civil rights for racial minorities in the US.”</p>                                |

**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

- Students struggled distinguishing between political and economic debates that took place between 1910 and 1929.
  - Teachers could create exercises that use graphic organizers to compare the political, economic, and social/cultural movements of the period.
- Students struggled with the structure of the short answer questions.
  - Teachers can utilize the scoring guides and sample responses to past short answer questions on AP Central and ask the students to discuss ways to edit low scoring responses so that they would earn the point.
- Students struggled with the differences between the terms “describe” and “explain.”
  - Teachers can refer to the definitions of these terms in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#).

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessments items for every unit of the course, including practicing SAQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Module on Period 6: 1865–1898 and the Teaching and Assessing Module on Period 7: 1890–1945, which address the content required in this question.
- The optional activities for Topics 6.6, 6.7, and 6.8 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#) offer students an opportunity to practice description and comparison, two important skills for this question.
- Teachers may utilize some of the optional sources for Topics 7.10, 8.6, and 8.9 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#), such as Huey Long, “Our Plundering Government” and Frederick K. Johnson, “The Civilian Conservation Corps: A New Deal for Youth.” Teachers may use the following: John Robert Moore, “Josiah W. Bailey and the ‘Conservative Manifesto,’” President’s Committee on Civil Rights, “To secure these rights: The report of the President’s Committee on Civil Rights,” “Civil Rights Act of 1957,” “To Fulfill These Rights,” March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, “SNCC Bulletin: Information on Today’s Brutality in Selma, Alabama.”
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be found at: <https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushhistory/resource-library/>.

## Question 1—Document-Based Question

**Task:** Document-Based Question

**Topic:** Economic Change and United States Society, 1865 to 1910

|                           | Max Points: | Mean Score: |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Thesis/Claim              | 1           | 0.85        |
| Contextualization         | 1           | 0.60        |
| Evidence from Documents   | 2           | 1.42        |
| Evidence Beyond Documents | 1           | 0.52        |
| Sourcing                  | 1           | 0.38        |
| Complexity Understanding  | 1           | 0.16        |
| Overall Mean Score:       | 3.94        |             |

***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Responses were expected to demonstrate all six major Historical Thinking Skills within the curriculum framework through the sourcing and analysis of primary sources, formulating an argument and making connections within and across historical contexts.
- Responses were expected to utilize content from Period 6: 1865–1898 and Period 7: 1890–1945 to build a historical argument.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

- Responses demonstrated a significant knowledge of the content of the curriculum assessed in this question. This use of content resulted in most responses earning a point for Contextualization. Similarly, a large percentage of responses earned the point for Evidence Beyond the Documents, frequently citing, among other things, vertical and horizontal integration, Standard Oil, Andrew Carnegie.
- Many responses demonstrated proficiency in their discussion of the impact of Theodore Roosevelt as a “Trust Buster” and his usage of previous legislation, such as the Sherman Antitrust Act, to regulate large corporations.
- Responses tended to display an understanding of the importance of labor unions. Additionally, responses noted that the working class expected more government involvement in the economy.
- Responses tended to understand the widening wealth gap between the working class and the wealthier Americans and the role of a laissez-faire approach to managing the economy.
- When responses engaged in document sourcing, many of the responses sourced the historical situation of the document within the time period of the prompt. Thus, several responses earned the Complexity Understanding point through effective use of evidence relevant to an argument that addresses the prompt by sourcing at least four documents.



**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

| <i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses could have benefited from a discussion of monetary policy in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era.</li> </ul>                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses addressed specific economic policies of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era.<br/><br/>“Beyond influencing the purchasing decisions of everyday Americans, the ideals of labor reform and control of monopolies extended to the government in the early 20th century as well. President Roosevelt was elected in 1900 on his platform of the Square Deal, which promised to consider the working-class interests in controlling big businesses. The cartoon aims to show how Roosevelt’s policies through trust control laws attempted to reign in the power of big businesses.”</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses could have benefited from a discussion of the New South, particularly the experiences of the African American community, the emergence of the Great Migration, and sharecropping and tenant farming.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses addressed the growth of the New South and how the Great Migration emerged, in part, because developments in the South did not fully improve economic opportunities for African Americans.<br/><br/>“Economic systems within America still perpetuated the wealth gap between the wealthy and the poor and therefore did not change the social structures or values of society. This theme is illustrated in Document 2, where Henry George critiques the American belief that an increase in economy and wealth correlates to progress within society, instead stating that the nation correlates the perpetuation of poverty to success within America. The ideas behind George’s statements are supported by the system of sharecropping in the South, where emancipated African Americans were placed into contracts with white Southern landowners to extract low-wage, limitless labor from these African Americans on their plantations in a system that mimics the former institution of slavery. The system of sharecropping perpetuated an old form of slavery, which involved restricting the power of workers and keeping them in a cycle of poverty.”</li> </ul> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses could have benefited from a discussion about the new communities and centers of commercial activity in the West, (e.g., boomtowns) and how the development of the West affected Native Americans and Mexican Americans.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses identified specific evidence about the growth of new commercial centers and how the development of the West affected Native American and Mexican American communities.<br/><br/>“The railroad encouraged westward expansion and unification of America. It promoted the population growth of westward cities such as Chicago and connected them to Eastern and Southern states through accessible trade. However, Vinton delivers this speech in a sermon because he is a Christian minister. This is important because he likely supports Manifest Destiny, which is the ideology that Americans were destined to spread democracy throughout the entire continent. This explains why he does not mention Native Americans in his sermon because he believes that Native Americans should assimilate in American society because Christianity and democracy is superior. He does not want his Christian audience to pity the Native Americans as the railroads destroy their traditional lifestyles and Americans forcibly settle on their land. Additionally, many philanthropists acted to improve the environment to counteract their exploitation of raw materials. For example, the American Bison Society was sponsored by philanthropists to preserve the Buffalo in the early 20th century.”</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses could have benefited from a discussion of natural resources and their connection to international trade and United States relations with Latin America and Asia.</li> </ul>                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses addressed the role of United States imperialism in encouraging debates over economic development and use of natural resources domestically.<br/><br/>“Document 6 shows a description of why a big economy is good. It says that it can adequately meet the needs of the people living in the country and also get goods from other countries with its foreign power and wealth. This was written after the Spanish American War and the gaining of Cuba and the Philippines, which contributes to why the article talks about the maritime aspects of a large economy. The shift of the economy to being industrial also affected the US motives for imperialism. Many middle-class people thought that the U.S should seek to expand its territory in order to get more natural resources because</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

|                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                           | those resources are needed in the factories that are now in the economy.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses lacked an exploration of the influence of immigration on urbanization, the value of labor, and nativism.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better responses addressed the influence of immigration on debates over labor conditions in urban centers.</li> </ul> <p>“This life was poignantly shown in Jacob Riis’s photo essay, <i>How the Other Half Lives</i>. It depicted various scenes from urban tenement life for factory workers, and showed the horrible conditions they lived in, such as tiny and filthy houses with little to no hygiene and basic necessities.”</p> |

**Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

- Teachers could work with students to always go “one step more,” as many responses either described the content of the documents but failed to utilize them for their argument or only described the sourcing of the documents but failed to explain why that was relevant to their argument.
- Teachers could continue to highlight the theme of Work, Exchange, and Technology, as well as the theme of Geography and the Environment.
- Teachers could emphasize the importance of using action words in the prompt to frame their response. In the case of this question, the word “evaluate.”
- Teachers could continue to emphasize the importance of chronological reasoning in developing an argument that responds to the prompt.
- Teachers could encourage students to explain the relevance of the Evidence Beyond the Documents rather than just mentioning key terms.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessments items for every unit of the course, including practice DBQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items become increasingly challenging as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Modules on Period 6: 1865–1898 and Period 7: 1890–1945.
- The optional activities for Topics 6.3, 6.4, 6.7, 8.2, and 7.4 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#) offer students an opportunity to practice source analysis and connecting evidence to an argument.
- Teachers may utilize some of the optional sources for Topics 6.7, 6.11, and 7.4 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#), such as “The National Colored Labor Convention,” Florence Kelly’s “Out Toiling Children,” and John Muir’s letter to Theodore Roosevelt.

- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be found at:  
<https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushistory/resource-library/>.

## Long Essay Question 2

**Task:** Long Essay Question

**Topic:** British Colonial Adaptation to Environment

|                                 | Max Points: | Mean Score: |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Thesis/Claim</b>             | 1           | 0.80        |
| <b>Contextualization</b>        | 1           | 0.55        |
| <b>Evidence</b>                 | 2           | 1.25        |
| <b>Analysis and Reasoning</b>   | 2           | 0.79        |
| <b>Overall Mean Score: 3.27</b> |             |             |

***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Responses were expected to demonstrate an understanding of how British colonists in the Americas adapted to their environments from 1607 to 1754. The time frame encompassed the founding of Jamestown to the start of the Seven Years' War.
- Responses could use a range of course content, including colonial agricultural practices such as cash crops and semi-subsistence farming, regional economic and social differences between the British colonies, and the triangle trade.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 1.6, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

- Many responses successfully used the required Historical Thinking Skills when framing responses to make arguments about the ways that British colonists in the Americas adapted to their various colonial environments and regions in the years 1607 to 1754.
- Many responses presented accurate content knowledge on the topic of the prompt, commonly referring to developments that motivated environmental adaptation, such as European territorial expansion, regional agricultural practices, colonial economic goals, and the cultural and geographic differences between the colonies.
- Many students correctly crafted a thesis statement that addressed the prompt and offered a relevant line of reasoning concerning various adaptations to the environment. Most responses focused on economic success based on geographic characteristics. Some more advanced responses classified the role of the environment in the social development of the colonial areas.
- Many responses demonstrated Contextualization by focusing primarily on early European exploration, such as the voyages of Columbus, pre-contact Native American adaptations to their environments, early European settlement patterns, and Spanish colonization prior to the era of the prompt.
- Many responses correctly used cash crops, slavery, staple crops, the triangle trade, and conflict with Native Americans as evidence of adaptations to the environment in British North America.
- Many responses contained strong supporting evidence relevant to the time period to support an argument. Commonly used examples were the transition from indentured servitude to slavery in the production of cash crops and the adoption of economic activities based on the characteristics of colonial geographic regions.
- Many responses explained how geographical differences led to specific economic activities, such as fertile soil leading to cash crops, forests leading to shipbuilding, and harbors leading to trade.
- Many responses compared the colonial regions, discussing their geographic and economic differences.
- Responses earned the second point for demonstrating Complex Understanding in a variety of ways. Some responses identified multiple economic drivers of adaptations to the environment or compared different colonial regions across time or geography. Others earned the Complex Understanding point

by successfully using four pieces of evidence to support a nuanced argument. Commonly used evidence included cash crops (specifically tobacco), the growth of enslaved labor, the production staple crops in the middle colonies, and shipbuilding and trade in New England. Others included an additional theme, such as discussing how religion influenced environmental developments in Puritan New England.

***What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?***

| <i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many responses demonstrated chronological misconceptions from the time period immediately following colonial settlement from 1607 to 1754. Examples included the American Revolution or Manifest Destiny.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses accurately described events and developments within the prompt time period from 1607 to 1754.<br/><br/>“Both indentured servants and African slaves worked these lands and cultivated these crops, which grew perfectly in the southern climate compared to the northern one. But indentured servants were eventually completely replaced by slaves coming from the Trans-Atlantic slave trade after Bacons Rebellion, where indentured servants rose up against plantation owners and proved that they were unreliable. This reliance on plantations and agriculture is what built the colonies initial economy, and what made them so important to the British.”</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many responses simply described characteristics of the British colonies without focusing on how these events, developments, and/or trends connected to an environmental adaptation.</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses accurately described characteristics of the British colonies and how that characteristic grew out of their adaptation to geography or the environment.<br/><br/>“In contrast, colonies in the middle region of the Atlantic coast sustained themselves through different means and witnessed diversity within colonial populations. Economically, the Middle colonies utilized permanent farms and agriculture. Specifically, Middle colonies like Pennsylvania, established by William Penn after receiving a charter, farmed so-called cereal grains like oats and wheat. The colonists within Pennsylvania came to be called Quakers. These Quakers held the belief of religious tolerance. Unlike the Pilgrims that settled Plymouth Rock in the New England colonies, who tolerated religious freedom only for those same Puritans,</li> </ul> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Quakers fostered diverse populations of settlers, and the Middle colonies became a melting pot of English and Irish settlers of a plurality of religious denominations.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses identified several specific historical examples relevant to the prompt but did not use them to support an argument about adaptation to the environment.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses built upon specific historical examples to support an argument about how British colonists adapted to their environment.</li> </ul> <p>“This is where the finding of tobacco came in. It was found by the colonists in America (not from Britain) that the usage of it could be effectively grown in the warm climate, and in large numbers, as well as to be used for a source of profit in trade specifically towards Great Britain. This spurred wealth for the colonists as they were able to support themselves with tobacco and trade it for income.”</p> |

***Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?***

- Teachers could encourage students to present their evidence explicitly and to offer explanations. For example, common uses of cash crops and Metacom’s (King Philip’s) War needed to be developed beyond mere references and to make a connection to the prompt to contribute to earning the second point for Evidence. Students could work on drafts to expand how and why the evidence shows an “adaptation to their environments from 1607 to 1754” to improve their writing skills.
- Teachers could provide opportunities for students to practice change over time and chronological reasoning through timelines and reinforcement of the course’s nine time periods.
- Some students struggled to use the Reasoning Process of Causation to frame or structure an argument. Teachers could consider using cause and effect graphic organizers to help students understand the causes and effects of events and developments in their units.
- Teachers could encourage students to differentiate content based on historical themes. Consider having students practice what factual information would be relevant within the established themes.

***What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?***

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice LEQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. These formative LEQs gradually increase in complexity as the year progresses.
- AP Classroom includes the Teaching and Assessing Modules on Period 2: 1607–1754, which addresses the content and skills related to this question.
- Teachers may utilize some of the optional sources for Topic 2.2, among others, in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#). In Topic 2.2, John Smith’s account of the foundation of

Jamestown in 1608 focuses on the English colonists and their relationship with Powhatan, which demonstrates how the English related to the local Native Americans in their environment. Alternatively, John Winthrop’s sermon, “A Model of Christian Charity,” describes New England as a “city on a hill” whose inhabitants, having entered into a covenant relationship with God, will build a new Israel to be emulated by Christians the world over. This demonstrates building a new spiritual environment in the British North American colonies.

- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be searched by AP History Thinking skill, reasoning process, theme, and resource type. Visit: <https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushhistory/resource-library/>.



### Long Essay Question 3

**Task:** Long Essay Question

**Topic:** Sectional Tensions and United States Society

|                          | Max Points: | Mean Score: |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Thesis/Claim             | 1           | 0.86        |
| Contextualization        | 1           | 0.85        |
| Evidence                 | 2           | 1.23        |
| Analysis and Reasoning   | 2           | 0.91        |
| Overall Mean Score: 3.85 |             |             |

***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Responses were expected to evaluate the extent to which sectional tensions shaped the United States between 1800 and 1848.
- Responses could use a wide range of course content, including regional economic and cultural differences, the growth of the institution of slavery, reform movements and antislavery activism, and political compromises, such as the Missouri Compromise.
- This question addressed, among others, Topics 4.2–12, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, and 5.6.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

- Most responses demonstrated a high degree of knowledge regarding tensions between the North and South over the institution of slavery and its westward expansion.
- Most responses demonstrated effective Contextualization by discussing regionalism during the colonial era, Revolutionary ideas, and expansion during the early republic.
- Most responses earned the Thesis/Claim point by providing a line of reasoning about sectional tensions between the North and South.
- Responses provided evidence related to the differing labor and economic systems of the North and South, including the North's industrial economy, northern support for tariffs and abolitionist activism, the southern use of enslaved labor to produce cash crops, the Missouri Compromise, the annexation of Texas, and the Mexican-American War.
- Most responses demonstrated historical reasoning through the Reasoning Process of Causation, explaining how the addition of new states and disagreements over the use of enslaved labor influenced sectional tensions. Other students used Comparison to frame an argument about the influence of sectional tensions on society in the North and the South.
- The point for demonstrating complex understanding was earned in a variety of ways. Most responses that earned the point for demonstrating a complex understanding incorporated multiple causes and/or effects or multiple perspectives into their responses through discussions of compromises and regional economic or social differences. A few responses demonstrated a complex understanding using relevant and insightful connections within and across time periods by extending a nuanced argument through to the Civil War.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

| <i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses demonstrated chronological misconceptions on topics such as the Kansas-Nebraska Act, John Brown’s raid, the Compromise of 1850, <i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i>, the rise of the Republican Party, the Dred Scott decision, and the Civil War.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses accurately described the growing tensions between the North and South over territorial expansion and addition of new states using evidence contained within the time frame of the prompt.</li> </ul> <p>“Fear of an imbalance in political power led the northern states to favor preventing the expansion of slavery, and a desire for increased political sway led the southern states to favor the expansion of slavery into the western territories. Such concerns were especially evident in the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which led to the admission of Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state.”</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some responses overgeneralized about the regions, such as through their discussion of the extent of abolitionist sentiment and regional economic differences.</li> </ul>                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses focused more on a nuanced understanding of abolitionism and its limited regional scope.</li> </ul> <p>“But movements like the Enlightenment brought the first seeds of abolitionism with its logic based ideology. The abolition movement in the north began to brew. While the majority of southerners did not own slaves it was their way of life and nearly all whites in the south were in support of the institution. However, the North began to realize that the spread of slavery into newly acquired states would put them at a disadvantage to slave reliant states who would vote in favor of themselves in any legislative issues, therefore, not for moral reasons but for economic and political purposes many northerners began to protest slavery in the newly acquired territories of the Union, thus leading to total conflict between the north and south.”</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responses exaggerated or mischaracterized political party platforms on topics such as popular sovereignty and abolition.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger responses focused on accurate description and application of the political party names and characteristics and their connections to sectional tensions.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

|                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>“Jackson breaks off of the Democratic-Republicans and forms the Democratic Party, which are pro-slavery, states’ rights, and who spearhead Jacksonian democracy during this period. Clay goes on to create the Whig Party in the 1830s, and ushers in the Second Party System. The Second Party System, Corrupt Bargain, and Election of 1824 exacerbate many of the issues regarding sectionalism, and further divide the United States on the grounds of political parties and ideological division.”</p>                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses conflated political compromises during the nineteenth century.</li> </ul>                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses accurately distinguished between different compromises and their influence on sectional tensions.</li> </ul> <p>“However, the Missouri Territory was to become a member of the Union as a slave state, which caused an immense uproar among members of the legislature. Eventually, the Compromise of 1820 is signed into law, in which Missouri is to be admitted as a slave state and a new state named Maine is created to counteract the imbalance. The Compromise also draws a boundary between free and slave states on the 36 30, which solidifies the division of the United States between the North and South.”</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses misunderstood connections between economic factors and how they led to regional tensions and sectionalism.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger responses connected the introduction of and growth of infrastructure to sectional tensions.</li> </ul> <p>“The North was starting to focus on manufacturing, while the south was still using enslaved labor. Furthermore, the north has better infrastructure, as they had started developing railroads. This created conflict since the two regions each believed their way of life was superior to the other region’s. This created tension between the two, which significantly impacted society as a whole.”</p>                                                                                                                    |

***Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?***

- Many responses would have benefited from a thesis with a stronger line of reasoning.
  - Consider posting a prompt as a bell ringer and having students create two or three analytic categories to become topics for the body paragraphs. As students' skills develop, they can experiment with a nuanced or qualified thesis, providing a framework for a complex understanding throughout the essay.
- Some responses relied on a vague contextualization statement.
  - Consider assigning a topic and having students individually write a paragraph with as much context as they can think of in a given/short amount of time. Next, students work in pairs or trios to create the most concise and specific contextualization paragraph with their combined ideas.
- Many responses did not successfully present evidence explicitly and provide explanations that make a connection to the prompt.
  - Consider assigning a broad topic and having students identify two to three proper nouns that relate to the topic. Next, have students work in pairs or trios to provide specific descriptions of each term and explain how each explicitly connects to the topic.
- Many responses struggled with chronology.
  - Consider providing a topic or an entire APUSH period and have small groups create a timeline of specific events in a few minutes. Next, draw a line on the board with events marking the beginning and end of the time period and assign students from each group to fill in events from their group work. Discuss as a class to conclude.
  - Consider using specific presidential administrations as a way to frame historical eras and significant events.

***What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?***

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice LEQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. These formative LEQs gradually increase in complexity as the year progresses.
- AP Classroom includes Teaching and Assessing Modules on Period 4: 1800–1848 and Period 5: 1844–1877, which address the content and skills related to this question.
- The optional activities for Topics 4.7, 4.8, and 5.2 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#) offer students an opportunity to practice connecting evidence to an argument.
- Teachers may utilize some of the optional sources for, among others, Topics 4.3, 4.12, 6.11, and 7.4 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#), such as “Remarks on the Tallmadge amendment,” “Letters from a Man of Colour,” and Frederick Douglass’ article “War with Mexico.”
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be found at: <https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushhistory/resource-library/>.

## Long Essay Question 4

**Task:** Long Essay Question

**Topic:** United States Society Response to Economic Change, 1960 to 2000

|                                 | <b>Max Points:</b> | <b>Mean Score:</b> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Thesis/Claim</b>             | 1                  | 0.61               |
| <b>Contextualization</b>        | 1                  | 0.66               |
| <b>Evidence</b>                 | 2                  | 0.79               |
| <b>Analysis and Reasoning</b>   | 2                  | 0.46               |
| <b>Overall Mean Score: 2.53</b> |                    |                    |

***What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?***

- Responses were expected to demonstrate knowledge of how United States society responded to economic changes from 1960 to 2000.
- Responses could utilize a wide range of content knowledge from Period 8: 1945–1980 and Period 9: 1980–present, including the Cold War, oil crises, deindustrialization, the rise of the service economy, globalization, and the Internet.
- This question primarily addressed Topics 8.2, 8.4, 8.5, 8.7–14, and 9.2–5.
- The majority of the responses to this question focused on the Reasoning Processes of Causation and Continuity and Change.

***How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?***

- Many responses succeeded in using required Reasoning Processes, especially Causation but also Comparison and Continuity and Change, when framing arguments about how United States society responded to changes in the economy from 1960 to 2000.
- Many responses correctly framed a thesis statement in the introduction or conclusion that addressed the prompt and offered a relevant and historically defensible line of reasoning about how society responded to economic changes from 1960 to 2000. Most successful responses focused on identifying two areas of social responses. Some advanced responses used categories to identify types of social responses and economic changes from 1960 to 2000.
- Many responses accurately identified content knowledge relevant to the topic and period of the prompt, commonly referring to the events of the Cold War, youth movements, and civil rights movements, as well as economic policies of the various presidential administrations. Most successful responses focused on description of details of various major events, policies or movements and then tied economic connections and social responses to these events and movements.
- Most responses correctly demonstrated contextualization by focusing primarily on the periods immediately prior to 1960, such as the causes and effects of the First and Second World Wars, the economics of the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and New Deal, the postwar economic boom, and the initial stages of the Cold War.
- Many responses correctly used Cold War competition, proxy wars, oil crises, stagflation, deindustrialization, the Rust Belt, and the dot-com bubble as evidence of negative economic changes that led to protests or activism. Other responses included the Space Race, the Great Society, the War on Poverty, civil rights reforms, cultural movements, Reaganomics, and the growth of technology and the Internet were used as evidence of economic changes embraced by society.
- Responses earned the complex understanding point by a variety of approaches, but most utilized four or more pieces of specific and relevant evidence to support a more nuanced argument. Others

successfully used evidence to demonstrate a sophisticated understanding by providing different perspectives relevant to the prompt.

**What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?**

| <i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Many responses misunderstood how to make the connection between economic changes and social responses.</li></ul>                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stronger responses not only identified the economic factors but also established a relevant connection to society and/or social change.<br/><br/>“Along with movements to and from the cities, there was also a national movement from the northeast to the south, into a region known as the sunbelt. Many new industries popped up around this part of the country, such as the rapidly growing defense industry with the onset of the cold war.”</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Many responses overgeneralized about movements and policies in the time period of the prompt, 1960 to 2000, and struggled to connect these movements to economic changes.</li></ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stronger responses provided multiple pieces of specific evidence relevant to the prompt and connected the evidence to economic changes.<br/><br/>“Although Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency was marked by his characteristic Great Society Reforms that introduced the Medicaid, Medicare, and Head Start programs, along with strengthening Social Security, it stoked conservative fears that government expenditure was growing too large and high taxation acted as an inhibition. Likewise, the Great Society reforms were accompanied by substantial military expenditures prosecuting the Vietnam War, which only magnified a looming deficit that Republicans and Richard Nixon were quick to campaign on in the 1968 presidential election.”</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Responses often identified specific pieces of evidence from the period of the prompt but made no connection, implicit or explicit, to economic changes or responses to economic changes.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stronger responses identified specific pieces of evidence from the period of the prompt and made connections to economic changes.<br/><br/>“Supply-side economics relaxed regulation on businesses and lowered federal intervention</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|  |                                                            |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | abilities, listening to this rise of conservatist values.” |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------|

**Based on your experience at the AP<sup>®</sup> Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve student performance on the exam?**

- Many responses struggled to identify economic effects in a historically specific way. Teachers could encourage students to think about the causes and effects of the various themes in United States history across periods.
- Many responses were unable to clearly connect the movements and issues of the period to economics.
  - Teachers could structure an activity that has students pair up at the end of each unit (each group having one topic) and describe how the various events/movements of the period had effects for or were influenced by economics.
  - Teachers could use “bell ringer” questions at the end of class sessions throughout the course that highlights the economic effects from the period being studied.

**What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?**

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this question:

- In AP Classroom teachers will find a rich collection of resources. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice LEQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. These formative LEQs gradually increase in complexity as the year progresses.
- AP Classroom includes Teaching and Assessing Modules on Period 8: 1945–1980 and Period 9: 1980–present, which address the content and skills related to this question.
- The optional activities for Topics 8.5, 8.9, 8.13, and 9.4 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#) offer students an opportunity to practice context and connecting evidence to arguments.
- Teachers may utilize some of the optional sources for Topics 8.4, 8.5, and 8.14 in the [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description](#), such as “How Television Changed Us,” “The Affluent Society,” and “The Sharon Statement.”
- The online AP Teacher Community includes a library of resources that can be found at: <https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apushhistory/resource-library/>.